

Manzullo secures another \$1 million to help fund Belvidere's Ag-Tech Park

BELVIDERE — Congressman Don Manzullo (R-Egan) announced last week he has secured an additional \$1 million in a Congressional appropriations bill to help establish a high tech research facility in Belvidere to study and bring to market new uses for agricultural products.

The project funding, which Manzullo requested earlier this year, appears in the Energy and Water Appropriations conference report, which the House and Senate are expected to approve next week before sending it to the President for his signature. Manzullo secured \$500,000 for the project in the last federal appropriations process.

The New Uses Information and Entrepreneur Development Center in Belvidere is a high-tech small

business economic development partnership in the works for several years among the City of Belvidere, Boone County, Growth Dimensions (local economic development group), Northern Illinois University, Rock Valley College, the Illinois Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research in Peoria.

The ag-tech center is designed to be housed in a 40,000 square foot building located along Interstate 90 near the Belvidere exit ramp. The concept of the business incubator is to provide a centralized location to commercialize ag-tech research taking place in Illinois and around the country. It will help entrepreneurs who have potential new uses

for farm products research their ideas and bring them to market.

Manzullo said the ag-tech center, along with the manufacturing technology center in Rockford, will help identify the Greater Rockford-Belvidere region as one of our nation's high-tech manufacturing and research hubs.

"This new research and commercialization center in Belvidere will create exciting jobs and business ventures for farmers and manufacturers in northern Illinois. It will complement our regional efforts to ensure our residents prosper deep into the 21st Century," Manzullo said. "This is another example of northern Illinois using what it has - our strong farming base - to create unique opportunities for our people."



Melanie Bradley photo

Congressman Don Manzullo and City of Belvidere Mayor Fred Brereton discuss the \$1 million grant secured by Manzullo for the development of the New Uses Ag-Tech Park in Belvidere.